

MINUTES OF MEETING  
State Soil Conservation Board  
9:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 12, 2003  
Natural Resources Education Center, Fort Harrison State Park  
5785 Glenn Road, Indianapolis, Indiana

Present:

Paul J. Ehret  
Peter A. Hippensteel  
O. William Mann  
Travis E. Nolcox  
Garry Tom, Sr.

Absent:

David L. Avery  
Ellsworth P. Christmas  
Karen L. Dehne

Others present:

Gregory L. Biberdorf  
Randy J. Braun  
Sherman Bryant  
Dorothy A. Corns  
Dean Farr  
Jane E. Hardisty  
Lyn Hartman  
Jill E. Hoffmann  
Harry S. Nikides  
James K. Ray  
Linda Schmidt

Chairman Pete Hippensteel called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. following conclusion of an executive session.

Minutes of July 8, 2003

Bill Mann moved to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Clean Water Indiana

Division director Harry Nikides reported that he has received additional contacts from districts seeking advice to complete their CWI project proposals. The first of the two-year contract deadlines occurs in November. Districts that have been unable to utilize funds may be required to return the unobligated amounts.

Soil and Water Quality Programs

Stormwater and Sediment Control:

Division stormwater and sediment control chief Randy Braun reported that claim vouchers are in process for payment of Rule 5 funds to districts. Sixteen districts have yet to respond to notification of available funding, and five districts have declined eligibility to receive funds. Funds have been declined due to the low amount earned through local Rule 5 activities.

The revised Rule 13 document was signed and became effective on August 6. The rule allows 90 days from that date for the MS4 cities and groups to submit their letters of intent. Signature is pending for the revised Rule 5 document. Staff is currently making necessary revisions to state forms to correspond to the rule updates.

The stormwater manual is in its second draft. Following release of newly developed and revised materials, a trial session of the stormwater management training course is anticipated during September.

#### Education and SWCD Support:

Conservation program coordinator Jim Krejci reported that the number of State Fair visitors to the Pathway to Water Quality exhibit has been very high.

Districts in the Rivers and Lakes Region are co-sponsoring a study tour to SWCDs in Ohio and Pennsylvania August 28-29.

Hoosier Riverwatch coordinator Lyn Hartman reported that 52 training workshops were scheduled for the summer months, with about 450 participants expected. Since program inception, approximately 3,000 volunteers have received the training and are contributing to the Riverwatch water monitoring database, along with many other interested citizens representing local groups. The program provides test kits with the training; 86 of Indiana's SWCDs are included among the 450 groups that have received kits. A number of partnerships have joined with Riverwatch recently to advance citizen awareness, including Earth Force, General Motors, and the American Bar Association. Riverwatch also works in cooperation with the Healthy Water-Healthy People component of Project WET and the Conservation Tillage Information Center for an EPA initiative in the Balkan states.

#### Lake and River Enhancement:

Division aquatic biologist Jill Hoffmann presented the completion report for a diagnostic study of Lake Gage and Lime Lake (Steuben). Using slides, Hoffmann discussed lake characteristics and conclusions from the study. The lakes support high quality fisheries and diverse aquatic plant communities, including one threatened and one endangered species of aquatic plants. The study was prompted following dramatic changes in water quality and algal blooms in 2000 and 2001. Lake conditions have improved since that time; the study identified causes for the changes and provided recommendations to maintain water quality in the lakes. Wetland preservation options, best management practices, tributary maintenance, education, and vigilance are among the recommendations included in the report document. Total project cost was \$13,674, with LARE contributing \$12,306, and a balance of \$1,508.60 remaining to be paid to the Lime and Gage Lake Association. Staff recommends acceptance of the report and final payment to the lake association. Board members and staff discussed factors in the watershed and connecting lakes that may contribute to fluctuations in water quality in the lakes.

Garry Tom moved to accept the Lake Gage and Lime Lake diagnostic study report per staff recommendation and to make final payment to the Lime and Gage Lake Association. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Land and water conservation program chief Jim Ray distributed copies of materials developed by staff for preliminary consideration of potential uses for new LARE funding designated for control of invasive or exotic aquatic plants and animals and for sediment removal. In accordance with the Board's recommendation at its July meeting, Ray facilitated an extended discussion of issues and ideas for potential inclusion in policies for project criteria, staff guidance, and utilization of the funds. Ray charted discussion notes for transcription and later review. It was noted that some coordination may be possible with DNR's proposed aquatic nuisance species management plan. Following the lengthy discussion, Board members agreed to lead further discussion at a public meeting to be held in conjunction with the State Board's September meeting.

#### District Issues/Updates

Paul Ehret moved to invite Porter SWCD supervisors to the State Board's September meeting to discuss issues related to the State Board of Accounts' audit findings. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

Pete Hippensteel advised that he had received letters from Noble and LaGrange SWCD supervisors suggesting a revision to the LARE application form to provide for a district official's signature for lake projects. Staff will obtain additional information concerning the suggestion.

Board members reviewed a draft letter to districts clarifying issues recently brought up in State Board of Accounts audit reports. The letter addresses purchase of refreshments for public meetings and travel reimbursements for district supervisors and employees.

Garry Tom moved to approve the letter for the chairman's signature and mailing to districts. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Eligibility for reimbursement of associates' expenses was discussed. Division staff can furnish a contract template to districts to assist in establishing working agreements with associates; however, it appears that State Board policy may need to be developed to further clarify the issue.

#### Chairman's Report

The chairman deferred his report due to length of the meeting.

#### Division Director's Report

Harry Nikides reported that 103 participated in the Supervisor Summer Splash meeting at Nashville on August 1-2. Fifty-five evaluations rated tours and speakers as good but the facilities and meals as poor. Meeting planners are investigating reasons for the poor ratings.

No new information is available concerning an appointment to represent the Lieutenant Governor's office on the State Board.

#### IDEM Report

Linda Schmidt, section chief for watershed management, advised that contracts for Section 319 grants for 2003 awards are in process. Draft applications are now being accepted for 2004 grants; final applications will be due by October 1.

### State Association President's Report

Sherman Bryant introduced Dean Farr, recently hired to fill the Association's executive director position. Bryant also provided an update of current Association activities, including status of their Section 319 grant application, committee restructuring, strategies for increasing CWI funding and status of CREP funding, participation in the Ohio-Pennsylvania district study tour, and the upcoming resolutions committee meeting.

### NRCS State Conservationist's Report

Jane Hardisty commented on Indiana's successful representation at the North Central NACD meeting at Madison, Wisconsin, in July. Hardisty also reported on recent meetings with Indiana's congressional delegation to provide updates on conservation issues and the recent RC&D national conference in San Antonio, Texas. Several Indiana staff members and districts were recognized at the recent international Soil & Water Conservation Society meeting at Spokane, Washington. A regional office restructuring is being implemented, and certifications for technical service providers are in process. Hardisty distributed copies of update information on Farm Bill programs, including flood recovery initiatives.

### Public Comment

Sherman Bryant called attention to the Natural Resources Summer Study Committee meeting in September at Pokagon State Park. State Association members have been invited to participate.

### Next Meeting

The next State Soil Conservation Board meeting will be held in northeastern Indiana in conjunction with a lakes tour and public meeting on the new LARE funding on September 9 and the State Board meeting on September 10, 2003.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dorothy Corns

Approved September 10, 2003:

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